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ABSTRACT

Intended for teachers, this mini-unit was developed to respond to the immediate, ongoing crisis between the United States and Iraq. The unit should give students at the high school level a context for the news and help them to see the connections between the decisions being made and their significance to broader policy development. It is designed to be used as a 1-to-2 day unit depending on the level of students and length of class period. The unit presents students with a choice of four options for resolving the conflict. Includes a worksheet. (BT)

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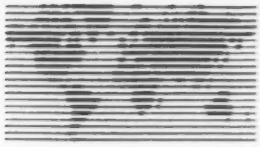

Choices for the 21st Century

ED 431 656

CRISIS WITH IRAQ

A CURRICULUM UNIT ON AMERICA'S CHOICES

SO 029 998

S. Graseck

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About the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project develops curricular resources on current and historical international issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.

Choices curriculum resources are designed to make complex international issues understandable and meaningful for students. Each Choices unit provides students with a thorough introduction to the topic under consideration. Students gain an understanding of the historical background and the status of current issues. In this way, they see how history has shaped our world. At the center of each Choices unit is a framework of alternative policy options that challenge students to consider multiple perspectives and to think critically about the issue at hand. Finally, students are challenged to articulate original, coherent policy options that reflect their own values, priorities, and goals as individuals and citizens.

About this Mini Unit

Occasionally Choices will develop a mini-unit on a current crisis and distribute it at no charge to interested teachers. *Crisis with Iraq* is such a unit. It was developed quickly to respond to the immediate crisis, providing students at the high school level with a context for the news and helping them to see the connections between the decisions being made and their significance to broader policy development. This unit is designed to be used as a one-to-two day unit depending on the level of students and length of class period.

We wish to thank Stephen Shenfield, Assistant Professor for Research at the Watson Institute, and Thomas G. Weiss, Research Director for the Global Security Program at the Watson Institute, for their assistance in developing this mini-unit.

For detailed summaries of all Choices units and selected excerpts,
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FOUR OPTIONS: A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

In August of 1990, Iraq invaded its neighbor Kuwait. After attempts to force a withdrawal by the use of trade and financial sanctions approved by the United Nations failed, the United States prodded the United Nations to consider military action. While discussions and diplomatic negotiations went on, the U.S. began a massive military buildup in the Middle East (ultimately more than a half million troops) and simultaneously formed a coalition of 28 nations. In December, the UN Security Council authorized the use of force if a withdrawal was not underway by January 15, 1991. Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, responded by rallying his people and predicted "the mother of all battles."

The United States-led coalition struck and a brief, lopsided war ensued. After 1000 hours of air strikes and a mere 100 hours of ground fighting, President George Bush called for a cease-fire. In so doing he stopped short of destroying the Iraqi army and attempting to remove Saddam Hussein from power. It also meant that Iraq's arsenal of biological and chemical warfare, as well as a nascent nuclear and missile delivery capacity, remained in place.

However, under the terms of the UN Security Council-sponsored cease-fire, Saddam Hussein was forced to accept a gradual reduction in Iraqi military strength and an end to Iraq's programs of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. Oversight of this reduction was to be carried out by a UN Special Commission (Unscom). Meanwhile, under the terms of the cease-fire agreement and subsequent adjustments to it, the Iraqis could not hope to sell freely any more than a regulated amount of oil (to pay for food and medicine as well as UN administrative expenses and some war reparations) on world markets until Unscom declared the country free of all chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons as well as the means of making more. In addition, under the terms of the cease-fire, substantial economic sanctions have been imposed upon Iraq. Although these sanctions were intended to last until the country is declared clean of biological, chemical, and nuclear capability, there has been pressure within the international community to relax the sanctions because of the suffering for Iraqi civilians.

The Unscom weapons inspection process has been in progress since 1991. Under this program more weapons have been destroyed than by six weeks of massive bombing during the Gulf War. However, in December Saddam Hussein put a halt to Unscom inspections of "sensitive" security sites and "presidential sites."

It is precisely this latter issue that brought the U.S. and Iraq to the brink once again in late February. This time there is no coalition of states. Britain, Canada, and Australia have vowed support for U.S. action, Kuwait has welcomed U.S. troops to its territory, and a few other states in the Persian Gulf have expressed limited and lukewarm support. Most other countries oppose U.S. military action. France, Russia, and China, the other three permanent members of the UN Security Council, have opposed U.S. action. Russia has tried to play an active mediation role sending a high level delegation to Baghdad early this year, and France has worked behind-the-scenes. Outstanding debts and future commercial possibilities with Moscow and Paris are factors in their diplomacy.

On February 20, with U.S. forces and military equipment massing in the region, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan left for Baghdad in a last-minute effort to broker an international agree-

ment that would be acceptable to all parties. Two days later, he announced that an agreement had been reached which addresses the major concerns of the U.S. and the international community — full and unfettered access to suspected weapons sites, particularly the eight presidential palaces in question, without time limits, and under the control of Unscom.

A particular concern is whether Saddam will stick to his agreement and whether there will be further obstructions as inspections progress in the coming weeks and months. Also of concern is the nature of any promises made to Saddam in exchange for his agreement on weapons inspections. Meanwhile, in the days following Kofi Annan's return, UN member states reviewed the agreement, while additional U.S. troops continued to arrive in Kuwait.

The four options presented as a framework for this discussion are intended to help you think about what direction U.S. policy should take in the region and the ramifications for broader U.S. foreign policy. Until Kofi Annan's trip to Baghdad on February 20, the issue seemed to be to strike or not to strike. But it was not that simple — and it is made perhaps more complex by the prospects of an agreement. It raises important questions about how we believe we should conduct ourselves in the world, what role we believe we should play in international conflicts, what costs we are willing to incur to promote or protect our national values, and what those values are.

These questions go to the heart of what we believe about our country and its role in the larger world. The question is broad but, as always, the devil is in the details. How will we act as such crises arise? And what do we buy with our decisions? You should keep these questions in mind as you explore the four options presented and then define for yourself what you believe that we should do.

Lesson Plan

The objective of this lesson is to look at the current crisis with Iraq, to consider the policy choices available to the U.S. and the longer term implications of each, to explore the connections between policy choices and underlying beliefs and values, and to come to a judgment about the most appropriate direction for U.S. policy. Students are encouraged to communicate their views, individually or as a group, to their congressional delegation and to the President.

Day 1

Introduction to the Topic

Ask student when they first became aware that we are at a crisis point in Iraq? What is the issue as they understand it? Have they heard about Kofi Annan's recent meeting with Saddam? What did they think when they heard that he was coming home with an agreement? So what's the issue now?

Considering Risks and Goals

Handout the worksheet with "Risks" and "Goals." Ask the students to take a few minutes to respond on their own. Then lead a brief discussion exploring their responses.

Introduction to the Options

Divide the class into four groups. Assign each one of the Options, asking the group to take the position assigned and work together to develop a short, coherent presentation to be given in class on day 2. In addition to the full-page description of their assigned Option, give all students a copy of the background and *The Options in Brief*. They should complete their preparation for homework. Encourage them to read the paper that night in order to include something very current in their presentation. [*Alternative: If you do not have time for group work in class, assign the Options the same way but have each student become expert in his or her assigned Option in preparation for Day 2.*]

Day 2

Presenting the Options

Ask each group to give a brief presentation of the Option they were assigned, making connections with the background material and recent news stories.

[*If this was not a group assignment, call on individual students to briefly describe the Option they were assigned.*]

The purpose of these presentations is to have students teach each other about the Options in preparation for a group discussion.

The chart at the right may be helpful to you or to your students as they sort out the differences among the Options.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Does the U.S. have strong enough interests in the Middle East to stay involved?	yes	yes	yes	no
Is it in the United States' interest to act unilaterally?	yes	yes	no	no
Is the best way to control Saddam's biological, chemical and nuclear programs through the Unscom inspection process?	no	yes	yes	Undecided
Do we want to take steps to get rid of Saddam?	yes	no	no	no

Discussing the Four Options & Coming to Judgment

The bulk of the class should be spent discussing the Options, weighing the pros and cons, risks and trade-offs of each, making connections between policy choices, their underlying values, and the implications for future policy, and determining what they feel U.S. policy should be on this issue.

Concluding Exercise — Write Their Own Option

Tell the students that the President has asked them for their opinions. Encourage them to articulate their own opinion drawing on the discussion. Alternatively, ask them to write a letter to the editor or to a public official such as a Congressperson or Senator.

The Options in Brief

Option 1: Plan for an All-Out Unilateral Military Strike

Since the Gulf War ended seven years ago, Saddam Hussein has shown that he is fundamentally the same dictator that he was before the U.S.-led action against him. His refusal to abide by the rules imposed by the UN after the Gulf War regarding inspections of his military sites is behavior that cannot be tolerated. The most recent UN-brokered agreement is only one more stalling tactic. Saddam will never live up to this agreement. We should face this sooner rather than later. It is time for the world's lone superpower to act. The U.S. should prepare to strike with all its might at the first opportunity and wipe out the weapons of mass destruction, remove Saddam with ground troops, and make room for new leadership.

Option 2 : Prepare for a Demonstration of Force

We have said that we will not put up with Saddam's flagrant violations of the terms of the Gulf War cease-fire. We must assume that the recent UN-sponsored agreement is just one more delaying tactic. We must be prepared to launch a strike on specific targets in Iraq that demonstrate that we have the fire-power and will to use it. Saddam only understands force. The U.S. should maintain its buildup in the region and, at the first sign of noncompliance, we should act, unilaterally if necessary, with air strikes designed to demonstrate that we mean business. If a first show does not do the trick, we need to be ready for a second, and a third — until he gets the message.

Option 3: Work in Cooperation with the International Community

In our increasingly interconnected world we can no longer act alone. The UN has already done more to reduce Saddam's chemical and biological capability through the work of its Unscom inspection teams than six weeks of massive bombing during the Gulf War. We should collaborate with the UN to uphold the newly negotiated agreement and work together with the rest of the international community to establish a long-term policy toward Iraq that enjoys the support of the broadest possible segment of UN member states. Any military action should only be entered into as a result of a new decision by the UN.

Option 4: Reduce Our Commitments and Back Out Gracefully

Against our own best interests, we have mistakenly walked to the brink. Now we must make a graceful retreat. We do have interests in the region, but no vital ones are immediately threatened by Saddam. Although our interests will be better served if the inspection process gets back on track, it is not in our interests to take the lead on this issue in light of the lukewarm support — and even active hostility of many countries — in the Arab world and elsewhere. The recently negotiated UN-sponsored agreement gives us an opportunity to retreat with grace. We should step back and encourage the states in the region to play a more active role in the future.

Option 1

Plan for an All-Out Unilateral Military Strike

Since the Gulf War ended seven years ago, Saddam Hussein has shown that he is fundamentally the same dictator that he was before the U.S.-led action against him. His refusal to abide by the rules imposed by the United Nations after the Gulf War regarding inspections of his military sites is behavior that cannot be tolerated. Meanwhile, the slow-moving efforts of the UN and its Unscom inspection teams allow Saddam to continue to develop more weapons. The recent UN brokered agreement is only one more stalling tactic. Saddam will never live up to this agreement and we should face this sooner rather than later. It is time for the world's lone superpower to act — with or without the support of other nations. The U.S. should see that very tight compliance is a part of any agreement and then prepare to strike with all its might at the first sign of deviation and wipe out the weapons of mass destruction — biological and chemical, and nuclear. In such an all-out military effort we have an opportunity to do what we did not do in the Gulf War — remove Saddam with ground troops and make room for new leadership.

Goals

Destroy all weapons of mass-destruction, cripple Iraq's capability to produce such weapons in the future, remove Saddam so that he cannot be a threat in the future, and demonstrate to any other would-be dictator that such maverick behavior will not be tolerated.

Send a message to other countries, especially dangerous ones, that the U.S. is willing to carry the burden even when others flinch.

What would this mean for current policy?

We would act, alone if necessary, and swiftly.

An air attack would be only the beginning. If we are going to wipe out all weapons of mass destruction and the capacity to build more, we would need to follow this up with ground troops.

For all practical purposes, Iraq would fall under U.S. control until such time as the threat from Saddam is over.

Underlying beliefs

As the only remaining superpower, it is up to the United States to take the lead in the international arena. A volatile dictator threatens the stability of an entire region. We may not be appreciated now, but we will be when our mission is successful.

The principle of state sovereignty and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries should not prevent the United States from eliminating tyrants who threaten the rest of the world.

Criticisms

This will be costly in terms of American lives and will cause domestic unrest.

Extensive Iraqi civilian casualties will lead to severe criticism at home and abroad.

This action could support accusations that the U.S. believes might makes right and that it is unwilling to operate within the constraints of international consensus.

This could undermine Arab regimes friendly to the U.S. (such as Egypt), and destroy our role as mediator in Middle East peace process.

The likely successor to Saddam could be as bad or even worse.

This action could lead to the breakup of Iraq and this would destabilize the region.

Attacks on Iraqi military installations could release the remaining chemical and biological agents that we are trying to control.

OPTION 2

PREPARE FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF FORCE

We have said that we will not put up with Saddam's flagrant violations of the terms of the Gulf War cease-fire. Given his track record, we must assume that the recent UN-sponsored agreement is just one more delaying tactic. We must be prepared to launch a strike on specific targets in Iraq that demonstrate that we have the fire power to do real damage to Saddam's military capability and that we have the will to use it. Saddam only understands one thing — force. We cannot continue to hold back while those in the region stick their heads in the sand, the world's leaders argue among themselves, and Saddam goes on orchestrating it all. In an effort to force Saddam to live up to his agreements on inspections and destruction of weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. should maintain its buildup in the region and, at the first sign of noncompliance, should act, unilaterally if necessary, with air strikes designed to demonstrate that we mean business. If a first show does not do the trick, we need to be ready for a second, and a third — each calculated to do further damage to his military capability — until he gets the message. Only then will Saddam begin to take seriously the diplomatic efforts to avoid war and begin to cooperate.

Goals

Focus on getting the inspection process back on track and keep it going unobstructed because weapons inspections that are 80 percent effective will be more effective in controlling Saddam's remaining chemical and biological capability than indiscriminate bombing.

Focus on weapons inspections, not on attacking and weakening the Iraqi regime.

Demonstrate that our threats are not just hot air. We have force and intend to use it.

Shock Saddam to his senses so he will have to cooperate with the UN inspectors.

What would this mean for current policy?

The United States should continue to build up forces in the region and prepare to launch a limited strike on Iraq to damage Saddam's biological and chemical weapons program, thereby coercing him into compliance with weapons inspections.

We should prepare for a second and a third strike if necessary.

Underlying beliefs

Saddam will back down when he realizes that the U.S. is not afraid to use force.

The United States cannot back down now and expect to be taken seriously in the future in this arena or elsewhere. Conversely, if we demonstrate our strength and our resolve in this situation, our credibility will be increased and we will be in a better position to deal with other tyrants in the future.

Criticisms

A limited military strike from the United States could spark an aggressive response from Saddam. He will be angry and still have plenty of chemical and biological material with which to respond. And we will be the focus of his anger. What will we have gained?

Any retaliation from Saddam could be focused on Israel as a U.S. ally in the region. If we then have to come to the aid of Israel against an Arab state, our ability to broker an Arab-Israeli peace in the Middle East will be further compromised. Indeed, the whole Middle East could explode.

Saddam's neighbors will be threatened by our willingness to act within the region without them. Meanwhile, world leaders will see us as the Lone Ranger unwilling to work collaboratively in the future on other security issues as well as on such issues as global warming or human rights.

Option 3

Work in Cooperation with the International Community

In our increasingly interconnected world we can no longer act alone. If any action is going to be taken in Iraq, it must be decided by and enforced by the UN. The UN has already done more to reduce Saddam's chemical and biological capability through the work of its Unscom inspection teams than during the six weeks of massive bombing during the Gulf War. We should collaborate with the UN to uphold the newly negotiated agreement and, as new wrinkles arise, take advantage of the good relations some countries, such as Russia, have with both sides and let them apply their mediation skills to help negotiate settlements. We should work together with the UN to establish a long-term policy toward Iraq that enjoys the support of the broadest possible segment of the UN member states, including all five of the permanent members of the Security Council. Any military action should only be entered into as a result of a new decision by the UN.

Goals

Stop Iraq from threatening its neighbors or international interests in the region.

Strengthen the processes of international cooperation for such issues.

Look to the future and keep Russia and China "in the fold" as constructive and responsible allies on international issues.

What would this mean for current policy?

We must accept the newly negotiated agreement worked out by the UN.

As new conditions present themselves, we must be willing to compromise with the leaders of the community of states (particularly Russia, France, China, and Britain) in defining goals and objectives. If this means dropping our opposition to the loosening of sanctions in order to present a unified front, the compromise would be worth it in order to strengthen the ability of the international community to cooperate in the future.

We must act only with a broad coalition under the auspices of the UN.

Underlying beliefs

We are living in an increasingly interconnected world. We cannot afford to isolate ourselves. We must consistently build the foundations of international cooperation and this will require compromise. It would be shortsighted to do otherwise.

Saddam is not only a threat to U.S. interests in the region. His regime is a threat to international order. If we make it clear that we will not act alone, other countries will come together to decide on appropriate action and act as a coalition as in 1991. We must place our trust in the international community.

Criticisms

Saddam is continuing to build up his chemical and biological weapons arsenal while we fight among ourselves about how to deal with him. He will surely find new ways to break out of any agreements. Time is on his side, not ours.

If push comes to shove, the UN will never be able to decide to act. Russia is not going to be manipulated into following our lead and at this point they will never see it any other way.

Option 4

Reduce our Commitments and Back Out Gracefully

Against our own best interests, we have mistakenly walked to the brink. Now we must make a graceful retreat. We do have interests in the region, but no vital ones are immediately threatened by Saddam. We want to see Saddam's biological, chemical, and nuclear capability controlled, but more progress has been made on this with the Unscom inspection process than in six weeks of massive bombing during the 1991 Gulf War. Although our interests will be better served if the inspection process gets back on track, it is not in our interests to take the lead on this issue in light of the lukewarm support — and even active hostility of many countries — in the Arab world and elsewhere. The recently negotiated UN-sponsored agreement gives us an opportunity to retreat with grace. If that agreement falls through and we pick up the cause again and attack Iraq, we will be acting in opposition to most of the states in the region, thus weakening our position with them, compromising our ability to broker a Middle East peace, and threatening the flow of oil. We should step back, see how the UN agreement plays out, and encourage the states in the region to play a more active role in the future.

Goals

Get out with our reputation intact.

Improve relations with the Saddam's neighbors.

Avoid becoming the target of Iraqi aggression in the future.

Don't give allies and enemies additional ways to build up opposition to the United States.

What would this mean for current policy?

The United States should pull back from the brink and let the Middle East states know that we consider this to be first and foremost a regional problem. We should let them know we will support them if asked but that we are not going to take any more role than other world leaders, and then only at the request of states in the region.

Drop our current opposition to loosening sanctions against Iraq.

Underlying beliefs

We should not send troops abroad or engage in air strikes unless vital U.S. interests are under immediate threat and no other options exist to protect them. For example: If our concerns are oil, there are other sources. If our concerns are that we will be attacked, other states are closer and more likely targets.

Unilateral U.S. military action toward Iraq might cause Saddam Hussein actually to use his biological and chemical weapons and, even if it were not directly against us, we would be blamed. This could turn other nations in the region and elsewhere against us.

We cannot afford to act in opposition to the wishes of other countries as clearly expressed by the UN.

Criticisms

Our credibility will be damaged by such blatant backing down.

We are just as threatened by Saddam's buildup of chemical and biological capability as the states in the region. We cannot afford to bow out and leave it to them.

If we do not take action, this will mark the second time we have let this outrageous dictator walk away unscathed. Others can only learn one lesson: They can operate outside the rule of law and get away with it.

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WORKSHEET

Risks: How do you assess the risk posed by the following threats? Rate them as follows:

The consequences are:	**The scenario is:**
1 = Severe	A = Highly likely
2 = Serious	B = Somewhat likely
3 = Somewhat serious	C = Not very likely
4 = Minor	D = Remote

___ ___ If we do not stand up to Saddam Hussein, he will manipulate the inspection process and continue his buildup.

___ ___ A Saddam left unchecked will be able to cut off our access to Middle East oil.

___ ___ If we allow Iraq to rebuild its military machine, it will be a threat to Israel.

___ ___ If we sidestep the possibility of an international agreement and act unilaterally against Saddam, we will make it virtually impossible to work jointly with the UN and the international community in future crises.

___ ___ If we act against Saddam when his neighbors are not in support of our actions, we will turn even moderate Arab states against us, destroying our ability to mediate a Middle East peace and jeopardizing our access to Middle East oil.

___ ___ If we attack Iraq, Saddam could retaliate with an attack on Israel. If Israel responds against Iraq, this could threaten our relationships with moderate Arab states in the region.

___ ___ If we back down now, we will lose all credibility for the future.

___ ___ If we go to war (particularly a land war) with Iraq, large numbers of American soldiers will die.

___ ___ If Saddam is allowed to build up a stockpile of chemical and biological weapons, he could hold the region hostage.

Goals: What do you think of the following goals? Rate each of these:

1 = Strongly support	3 = Oppose	5 = Uncertain
2 = Support	4 = Strongly oppose	

___ Eliminate Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons capability.

___ Prevent a costly and counterproductive war.

___ Demonstrate that, despite individual differences, on important things the international community is a force to reckon with.

___ Strengthen the international community's ability to resolve crises.

___ Gain long-term security of moderate Arab states in the region.

___ Gain long-term security of Israel.

___ Demonstrate to other would-be dictators that no country will be allowed to operate outside of the law.

___ Secure oil flow from the region at a reasonable price.

___ Secure American influence in the region.